DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

RELEASE IN PART DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DATE: June 17, 1953

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SUBJECT: American and British Attitudes on Middle East Defense

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR S/P

PARTICIPANTS: British Embassy: Mr. Beeley
NEA: Mr. Jernegan

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Mr. Beeley asked me to give him our present thinking on the general question of Middle East defense. I outlined it as follows:

1. We had decided that the MEDO concept had to be put on the shelf for the present. The political atmosphere in the Arab States simply made it useless to push this plan. (Mr. Beeley indicated the Foreign Office agreed with this view.)

2. We thought the best plan for the moment would be to work individually with those States which seemed most disposed to cooperate with the West for defense. These would include Iraq, Syria and Pakistan.

3. So far as concrete military planning for area defense was concerned, in the absence of participation by States in the area, we had reached no firm position. However, on the working level the Department inclined to feel that planning should be done secretly and rather informally by military representatives of the Nations principally concerned. [redacted] I did not think we would recommend the recent Turkish suggestion that the Western Powers proceed immediately to establish a formal public planning organization for Middle East defense. NEA, at least, considered such a formal public organization would be badly received by the Arabs.

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.3 NLS, 8-1
By [illegible] NARA, Date E3
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SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

Mr. Beeley said the working level of the Foreign Office had recently restated its own old position in favor of a public MEDO along the lines of the Turkish suggestion. This restatement was now being circulated among interested Government Departments in London. He himself was not sure however that this was a sound position nor was he sure that it was completely accepted in the Foreign Office itself.

In connection with the discussion on the Iraqi situation, Mr. Beeley indicated concurrence of the Foreign Office in the idea of working with individual Arab States, notably Iraq, as a start toward building up area defense.

NEA:JDJernegan:hh